3: Redlich S-3 (no date) 1936 EG1 Albania EG1

ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

133 The extensive basin-shaped plains of eastern Albania—especially the plain of Metova in the upper region of the White Drin Valley, and the plains of Kosova and Tetova—are important to Albania. There are many lakes in these regions.

463 Agriculture and cattle raising are the principal occupations, with olives, the making of
241 olive oil, grains and tobacco being the prin-
135 cipal products of the country. But there is great mineral wealth (asphalt, arsenic, copper, iron, lead, lignite, naphtha, oil, and other mineral resources), which is largely yet undeveloped, and with time, possibly a very short time, through the development of the great abundance of these natural resources, including the fisheries, they will become the principal resources of the country.

AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE INTO ALBANIA

000 with their dusky green leaves and snarled old roots and trunks, to the grey, white and sun-baked shades of the dreamy little town, and all this set like a tiny little drop on the vast, fertile plain.

132 Elbasan is well-known for its great variety of products, made possible by the rich soil of the plain. The town, sheltered by the immense old wall, enjoys a somewhat hot-house atmosphere, for which it should indeed be grateful, for it becomes terrifically cold during the winter months when the east winds sweep over it from the mountains of
133 Librazhd. These great monarchs, snow-crowned ten months of the year, which surround the plain are very cool even in August, making them delightful resorts from the heat of the plain.

• 241 This district is versatile in that it can produce, in this dual atmosphere, both the products of the north and the south. There is an abundance of cotton, rice and tobacco, as
245 well as maize, barley and wheat. And unlike many of its neighbors, it has its own figs, grapes, melons, oranges, lemons and olives growing on the plain, and apples, pears, raspberries and various other northern fruits mellowing into ripeness on the mountains p. 123 surrounding Elbasan.

3: Redlich S-3 (no date) 1936 EG1 Albania EG1

Industry

HAVING immense natural wealth and possessing an abundance of raw materials and considerable reserves of power, Albania is well placed for the development of industry and may therefore be considered a country of the future. Already one can observe great progress made since the world war.

Albania being essentially an agricultural country, it is logical that agriculture and the food industries are so far most developed. The possibilities of future development are also great, there also being large surplus stocks of agricultural products not required for home consumption.

Another industry yet to be developed on a larger scale is timber. Albania is exceptionally rich in forests. Many of the forests are still untouched as domestic needs are filled easily from so dense a growth. Taking into consideration the large number of fully grown forests suitable for felling, and the excellent quality of the wood, the timber industry could be developed very profitably.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

fashion, a well-scoured copper pan to mix the meal in, a wooden bowl or two, a few horn spoons, a copper *ibrik*, or coffee pot, and a brass lamp. One of the two rooms is used as a storehouse for the maize or grapes, which are spread out and sprinkled with salt in order to preserve them. The other serves as general living and sleeping apartment, where the fire is made on the floor, the smoke escaping through a hole in the roof. Each house has its garden well stocked with fruit and vegetables, and its tobacco plot, surrounded by a high loopholed wall. Each village has, too, its green, in one corner of which is the paved threshing-floor, where the grain is trodden out by horses.

The physical appearance of the women of Albania varies according to the district they inhabit, the tribe to which they belong, and the conditions under which they live. The Skipetars of the Drin and the Gheg and Miridite women of North Albania generally are tall, handsome, and well-made, having good complexions and not infrequently fair hair, which, as the following verse from one of their folk-songs shows, is much admired:—

O maiden so tender,
No pipe of Vizier
Was ever so slender
As thou art, my dear!
The soft silken tresses
Of thy yellow hair,
The glad breeze caresses,
Like flax threads are fair.

They are also dignified in demeanour, capable of undergoing fatigue and hardship, and exceedingly courageous.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

789 hearth, in order that he may take away with him all
788 danger from fire for the coming year.

St. John's Eve is observed in Albania with the
789 customary bonfire, to leap over which is considered so
372 salutary that even the old people venture to do so at least once. A curious ceremony, performed about this season, when the spring sowing is concluded, may also be here mentioned. Standing with his back to the plough, the farmer rubs part of the
[136] handle with earth in the belief that the wild swine will thus be prevented from damaging his crops.

789 On the day on which the new moon is first seen, all possible work is avoided, and no important task of any kind, such as ploughing, sowing, or harvesting, is commenced, for it would be sure to be unsuccessful. The girls and children look at the moon through a sieve, and rub their faces with a piece of silver, while they sing:

[539]

Young moon!
Young maid!
Health to me;
Ill to thee!
Head as soft as dough be thine!
Head as hard as stone be mine!

777 The 9th, 19th, and 29th days of every month are considered unlucky, as is also the Tuesday of every week, for setting out on a journey, or commencing any kind of work. Friday is also an inauspicious day
[241] for sowing, and Saturday for beginning to plough or dig.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

tained their independence for six centuries within the Turkish Empire look with distrust and contempt on the Toshks whose valleys have been flooded by every wave of invaders. The Toshks, who are the educated men of Albania, and the travelers, are equally contemptuous of the Ghegs, ignorant men unable to read or write. Nor do the Toshks admit that they cannot fight as well as the Ghegs. It was the Toshks in Sicily who fought with Garibaldi, the Toshks of Egypt who fought with Mehmet Ali; the Albanian soldiers in Russia and Rumania and Turkey are Toshk; the 50,000 Albanians in the United States are Toshk, and fought well with the Americans in France. Hundreds of them have returned to spread American ideas through the south; there are Toshk villages in which American English is spoken by nearly every child. Men from these villagers led the forces that drove the Italians from Valona in 1920. Indeed, say the Toshks, they can fight as well as Ghegs. But it is not fighting that Albania needs.

One of the errors about Albania, to which I fear my descriptions may contribute is the belief that the country is entirely mountainous. This is true of the northern part, adjoining Montenegro. Farther south the ranges are like the partitions in a house; steep, high, almost impassable, they surround valleys and plateaus of rich level land, much of it irrigated. The climate of the valleys is semitropical; rice, cotton, tobacco, citrus fruits, figs, and pomegranates

POSTSCRIPT

241 flourish. The southern plains, before the war,
439 exported fine horses in considerable numbers. Properly developed, Albania would be a rich agricultural country, even without the fertile valleys of Kossova and Epirus.

135 The mineral resources of Albania are unknown. During the Austrian occupation, a survey was made, looking toward the development of copper mines during the war; the results of the survey have vanished into the archives of the Austrian War Department. However, even the untrained eye perceives that there are copper and lead in the mountains. English mining engineers have told me that there are probably also silver and gold. I have seen veins of coal projecting on mountain sides; the mountaineers chip it off with hatchets or pry it loose with levers, and use it as fuel to a
[137] small extent. There are millions of feet of pine, oak, birch, and beech timber; unlimited water
[315] power. There are oil fields near Valona; producing oil wells were sunk, and later destroyed, by the Italians. Valona's military importance is not the only reason that Albanians are not left in peace.

175 There is also the political background. For twenty centuries the Albanians have been a beleaguered remnant of the first Aryan race in Europe. By character, temperament, and choice they belong with the peoples of the west, not with their Slav neighbors in the Balkans. But they have had no friends, either in west or east; their whole history has been a struggle for existence.

264 least 15, with as many more waiting patiently for second table, and the dishes included a whole roast sheep, which the Major picked apart with his hands and distributed.

463 252 265 Professional cooks are found only in the towns and in new government stations. In Prizren and Scutari, many of these cooks are Turks and their dishes consist mostly of mutton with various kinds of vegetables. Personally I found this cuisine very tasty. They also make a fine *yughurt*. Pastry cooks form another special group, and concentrate on *baklava* and *kadaif*, the two honey desserts familiar to eaters in Greek restaurants in all countries. Although their products may be carried into the mountains, the pastry cooks themselves stay at home.

262 The mountaineers obtain almost all of their own food by farming and herding. Hunting provides little or none for most families, and the same is true of fishing. Along the Black Drin, just above Kukës, a few fish are sometimes caught, and welcomed in the kitchen. In Prizren, fresh river fish are sold in the market. But fish is an insignificant element in the Mountain Gheg diet. The same is true of wild vegetable products, shoots, berries, and the like, collected by women. Furthermore each family produces practically all of its own food, except for a little coffee and tea, and a bit of sugar and salt. Most families are too poor to afford these imported luxuries often. The significance of the absolute self-sufficiency of the Ghegs in their food supply is linked with local differences in geology, and must have a profound effect upon differences in physique attendant on diet.

594 261

241 [594] Farming is a family affair. The man buys the iron implements which he needs in town, and makes the rest of wood. He breaks the soil with a spade, and ploughs it with oxen. As he ploughs each furrow, his wife walks behind him with a basket of seed, sowing it. Later the women will do the weeding, and the whole family comes out to reap. If the crop is wheat, they cut off each head of grain with a sickle and put the heads in a bag; if maize, they pick the ears and braid the husks for drying. They thresh small grains and beans with flails. When the tobacco leaves are ripe, the men cut them carefully and hang them on their verandas or the sides of their houses to cure.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

land. A high proportion of the year's rainfall falls in November and March:[1]

NOVEMBER	MARCH
Durrës 215 mm. (8·46 in.)	100 mm. (3·94 in.)
Shkodër 209 mm. (8·23 in.)	162 mm. (6·38 in.)
Krujë 337 mm. (13·27 in.)	157 mm. (6·18 in.)
Pukë 260 mm. (10·24 in.)	202 mm. (7·95 in.)

When a storm breaks over the mountains, every river and rivulet in the storm-swept area rises rapidly because the surface soil is seldom deep enough to retain much of the falling rain. In furious spate the rivers rush steeply towards the sea and, as they near the coast, spread far beyond their banks, engulfing many acres of arable land, and enlarging the marshes and lagoons so that they engulf many more. Because of this flooding, wheat cannot be sown near the coast. If sown in autumn, the November floods would wash it away, and after the March floods the ground does not dry in time for a spring sowing. Maize is, consequently, the only crop that can be raised. While awaiting its planting in late May, the fields lie fallow and grass-grown. The March floods are also responsible for the striking size and number of the hay meadows; much land never dries enough to grow even maize and must be left permanently under grass.

Climatically, too, the coastal plain dovetails into the high pastures. Whereas the mountains are deep in snow all winter, the temperature at the coast never falls quite to freezing-point. In January, the coldest month, the average recorded for Durrës and Valona (Vlonë) is respectively 47 and 48 degrees, with 40 and 41½ degrees at inland Shkodër and Tirana (Tiranë). Rain falls frequently and heavily, but unless a sudden rise in a river catches sheep unawares and sweeps them out to sea, neither animals nor shepherds come to much harm. By the end of May, when the rains cease, everything changes, and life near the swamps becomes intolerable for man and beast. Day temperatures rise swiftly towards their summer maximum of 86 degrees and the nights are hot, so that every movement is a burden. The dense vegetation of the swamps exudes odours as foetid as those in a tropical forest. Swarms of malaria-carrying mosquitoes emerge from the stagnant pools to attack man; swarms of gadflies, more savage than any

[1] Gashi, *Shqipnija*, p. 49.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

and if properly placed to begin with, caused no trouble. The same was true of living hedges inland. On the other hand, living hedges in the marshy areas near the mouth of the river Mat sometimes grew so tall that they damaged the neighbouring land with their shade. To prevent this, the owner had to lop overgrown trees once every three years. Failing this, his neighbour could complain to the headman; inevitably they gave him leave to cut the trees down to the root on the owner's ground, an intrusion that was in itself a punishment, and fined the owner 250–450 grosh for breaking the law about lopping.

Similar rules regulated the planting of fruit and other trees, olives being included among the former. In Mirditë a fruit tree might be planted only 5 'feet' (1 metre) from the boundary; another kind had to be at least 10 feet away. In Godolesh, a great fruit-growing area, a fruit tree could be planted on the very boundary, but in adjacent Labinot it had to be a span away. In Shkrel it could be planted anywhere on one's own ground, as it never caused trouble by itself. As with living hedges, care had to be taken that a tree did not cast harmful shade over a neighbour's land. If one did so in Shkrel the owner agreed amicably to lop it, raising no objections unless he had already quarrelled with his neighbour over something else. In Mirditë he was bound to lop the offending branches; if he failed to do so his neighbour could lop them as high as he could reach with a hook, the handle of which did not exceed $3\frac{1}{2}$ spans in length. In the mountains of Lesh the owner had to uproot the tree or to pay annual damages to his neighbour. In Godolesh the neighbour was entitled to stretch as far as he could and cut the too luxuriant branches with his short-handled axe. If a tree was doing no damage to neighbouring ground, it could not be lopped except by its owner. A man who transgressed this law in Mirditë had to pay its owner 500 grosh.

Sometimes an open drain adjoined a boundary. When it was first cut, each of the two neighbours provided half the ground required, did half the work and retained the earth excavated from his own side. Three stones, one big and two small, were left at the head to mark the boundary; the two other sets, normally placed in the middle and at the foot, were removed to make room for the water; as the drain discharged into a bigger channel, they could not possibly be left at the foot. The boundary naturally ran exactly down the middle. In most places the drain had to be cleared out

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annually. In Godolesh the two neighbours did it in alternate years, having exclusive right to the earth with its valuable fertilizing properties for the year when they did the clean up. In Lumë two neighbours cleared the drain together year after year and flung half the earth on one side and half on the other.

In other places one ditch seldom drained two neighbouring fields on the principle that 'you can't walk on my path or use my drain'. In Gurrëzë the man who wanted a drain had to cut it on his own ground with a 'footprint' (20 cm.) of land between the boundary and its edge for the protection of his neighbour's land. Without this buttress the drain might overflow or burst its bank to the detriment of his neighbour. In either contingency its owner had to pay compensation to his neighbour, but prevention of damage was always better for both parties. His neighbour might also accuse him of encroaching on his land, an insulting remark that provoked instant retaliation. If, later on, the neighbour wanted a drain he had to make one for himself, also a 'footprint' away from the boundary. In Lumë and Elbasan there was little risk that open drains would flood, but there too a space had to be left between their edge and the boundary. The avowed purpose of this space was to support the boundary stones. In all cases of single ownership the owner, on clearing the ditch, threw the earth on his own side, where it testified to his ownership if this was ever questioned.

Sometimes a man of Shkrel wanted both a drain and a fence. In that event the ditch was cut along the boundary and a strip of ground of the same width was set aside on the other side of the boundary. All the earth excavated from the ditch was thrown on this strip and so the neighbours became quits, one had a 'hole' on his land and the other a 'hill'. The fence was erected on the 'hill'.

We come now to one of the most important considerations in boundary making. North Albania is one of the wettest regions in Europe, and when the land was waterlogged it inevitably tended to slip downhill. The tropical intensity of many rainstorms increased the mischief. Terracing the fields would have helped to check it, but such manual labour is contrary to the habits and dignity of the north Albanian. His law, however, gave him every possible protection. When there were two fields on a slope, one above the other, they might be separated by a field-path, a road, an irrigation channel or a fence. (The term 'field-path' includes the

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little 'headland' which formed along the top of the lower field as the plough-oxen turned in their ploughing.) It was vital to save the upper field from being undermined by the tillage of the lower one. So the field-path (or headland) was always assigned to the upper field, with the boundary and the fence, if any, along its lower edge. The upper man was strictly forbidden to work the path, generally grass-grown, and so fairly cohesive. The lower man was even more strictly forbidden to cultivate right up to the path for fear he brought it down; since his own land slipped a little lower every year as he tilled it, the field-path soared higher above it. Only if the lower field was in grass did the law revert to its usual form. If the upper field was planted with maize and the lower one a grass meadow, all the land under the boundary stones belonged to the lower field because grass is in itself binding enough to stop landslides.

If a road or an irrigation channel divided the two fields, the upper bank belonged in most places to the upper man, and the lower to the other, since there seemed no risk that cultivation of the lower field would undermine the upper one. In Greater Dibër, however, no risks were taken. Both banks of an irrigation channel were given to the upper man in case the lower one worked too close to it. In any area, the owner of a lower field who made a drain for it had to make it four finger-breadths from his own boundary to make sure it did not damage the upper field.

If building a new house, the owner of the lower field had to keep it far enough away from the boundary to do no damage to the fence, as any such damage would make the upper field slip. On the other hand, the owner of the upper field had licence to build his house as close to the fence as if the site were flat, that is to say, with only half the width of a footpath intervening, but he was never foolhardy enough to do so.

Sometimes it was the lower man who received protection from the law. In Martanesh, for example, when the upper one built a fence or wall round his field, he had to leave the boundary stones as well clear of it as if the field were flat. This was in case it moved and encroached on the boundary.

Sometimes a fence was misplaced. Even if it was only one cm. inside the neighbour's land, it had to be moved. In Bicaj the neighbour sent a mutual friend to say so to the owner; if the latter ignored the message the neighbour took down the fence and saw

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

so numerous that their livestock amounted to a considerable percentage of the total in Albania. They were found mostly in the shrub areas, though a few very poor men lived also in the oak zone. But the vast majority of this leafy belt herded their flocks on a larger scale. Above each village there was always the overhanging mountain with its forests of beech and pine to hold the waters and keep the pastures green and sweet. Under the higher beech trees no grass grew, but in the sloping clearings the animals could graze at will. In winter, however, these clearings were too high to permit of habitation; besides, such tilling of the soil as did take place occurred at roughly the same level as the village, and it was there that the flocks found most of their feeding. In summer the fields and meadows, whether open or enclosed, provided hay for the animals; in the autumn the stubble served for a few weeks; while in winter they wandered over the grass. In spring the winter-sown wheat was improved by being eaten down a few inches by the sheep. Dried leaves from the numerous oak trees supplemented this winter feeding.

Sometimes the number of animals was such that all these sources did not suffice during the lean months, or sometimes a village had no suitable winter pastures or had lost them for political reasons. Many animals would then be slaughtered at the commencement of winter and the meat smoked or salted down, while the remainder lived to fare as best they could. The many owners who could not afford meat, fresh or salted, had to try to maintain their livestock until the spring. By that time the poor creatures were no better than living skeletons hardly able to walk out to the pastures.

On the long coastal plains and marshy river banks the owners of large flocks and herds were scorched out of their pastures in summer or plagued by the mosquitoes from the marshy swamps. This necessitated a wholesale migration at the beginning of summer to the cooler alpine slopes, a feature of Albanian life as characteristic as picturesque.

A few of the purely winter pastures belonged to the State, a few to private persons, and the immense majority to some community, either a tribe, a village or a village ward. State-owned pastures dated from Turkish times and were consequently found only on the plains near big centres, as Turkish control had little reality elsewhere. Examples of these were the forested swamps of Mamuras and the Highland village of Gurrëzë on the left bank of the river

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

nor produce nor an exchange for summering the flocks brought to the Crown (Kunorà) by tribesmen living north of Shkodër, but welcomed them because their sheep manured the fields. Comparatively recently, Lurë gave a Selitë man leave to summer his flocks gratis on Mt Murije, which, lacking their manure, would hardly have been worth the labour of tilling. Dervish Ali of Fulqet too was glad to let hundreds of sheep graze free in his meadows on Mt Dragû. Surroj and Arrn pastured sheep belonging to the Hereditary Captain of Mirditë without payment, because they also had so little arable land.

Except where the soil was so poor that the manure was welcome, as in Lurë, or where grazing was very plentiful, as in Theth, outsiders were rigidly excluded from alps which were owned or rented by a community. Nangë said it had not enough feed for its own flocks. Martenesh, Gurrëzë and Breg i Matit said they did not want their pastures disturbed by strangers. All infringements of the ban, both petty and grave, were punished by fines.

312 with the household marks of the families which are allowed to used
[493] the particular canal concerned in turn--, the screeching ox cart whose two wheels are two meters high because of the muddy roads, and which is drawn by the animals driven on by the goad and harnessed with a yoke on the nape of their necks; the wooden plow whose slade
501 and handle are both of one piece (Figure 9). The swimming bag made of a goat's skin that is blown up and tied to the front of the body, and the raft made of four such skins and a netting of intertwined osier switches, upon which the swimmer puts his clothes bundle (Figure 6). For the rest the people avail themselves of simple and double canoes, with or without side boards that raise the edge of the boat, with or without flanking beams that are nailed to the boat as floaters designed to maintain the equilibrium (Figures 7 and 8). Plank boats also occur. To husk the corn a mat of intertwined switches is placed on top of four posts rammed into the ground, and the corn cobs are then beaten with sticks one and one-half meters long, until the kernels have all fallen
411 to the ground through the plaited meshes (Figure 11). The long flint-locks, which are quite often beautiful old heirlooms, have only survived still in the south; they are being replaced by the modern repeating rifles, the pistols, and the handjars, the knife with the bone handle
221 of the shank of a cow, and the revolvers. The Albanians are to a
241 large extent farmers and in part migrating herders who commute back and forth between their winter quarters in the plains towards the Adriatic, where they work their fields, and their summer settlements on the highland pastures to which they return after they have finished working
[312] the fields. During wanderings in the highlands they rub last year's
[202] mountain snow on sheets of rock that have been scorched by the sun, in order to get water. The extensive settlement of the mountains has given rise to the development of a good signalling system by means
183 of shooting and shouting and their transmission. Certain old customs have been preserved that bespeak a life in firmly joined group combinations. To these belong the abducting of the bride, bride purchasing, the engagment of children, sworn blood brotherhood, and revenge for
[162] murder. The Albanians are approximately seven-tenths Mohammedan,
771 two-tenths Greek Orthodox, and one-tenth Roman Catholic. Nevertheless, all kinds of remnants have been preserved attesting an earlier spiritual life of the people which practiced a clairvoyant contemplation of supernatural powers and processes, basing its knowledge and its actions on the basis of its magical connection with these mysterious
000 forces. Thus their practices and beliefs included: building sacrifices,

[See 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, cat 116, p.69a -- Analyst]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania EG1

000 and future. From him I got some illuminating sidelights on Albanian history and a good deal of information on the political situation. He lived in a delightful old Turkish house full of antique woodwork and panelling and carved doorways, and showed me many curiosities and objects of interest which he had collected there. Among these were a cinerary urn, axe-heads and swords of the bronze age, as well as numerous arrow-heads of the same period and later. A cigar-box contained a large number of ancient Greek, Roman, and other coins, thrown in anyhow and as yet unclassified. Old chain armour and medieval weapons hung upon the wall. But in the whole collection I saw no flint implements whatever—not even an arrow-head. This struck me as curious. In a shed in the town he had assembled the larger antiques, such as pieces of stonework and carving, broken statuary, and other relics of Greek, Roman, and Illyrian origin, and it looked as though Elbasan would repay research by the excavator and the antiquary.

241 Under Mr. Lef Nossi's guidance I took a walk one day through the gardens and fields to the north of the city.[1] Here was every indication of a fruitful soil. Vegetables of all sorts flourished, including potatoes, greens, onions, cucumbers, beans, and a vegetable previously unknown to me called the *bamie*. Fruit grew in profusion—plums, mulberries, apricots, medlars, cherries, apples, pears and peaches; also figs, of which there are no fewer than thirty varieties, and pomegranates whose beautiful scarlet flowers and fruit I now saw for the first time. In the fields

1 [Elbasan--Analyst]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania E61

The Becktashi Monastery

241 grew wheat, oats, and other cereals, as well as maize, the staple food of the poorer classes. The slopes of the hills were covered with olives, and altogether the country round Elbasan seemed "a land flowing with milk and honey". [231] Honey in the literal sense, however, is a neglected product, and is only gathered wild, though in a country like Albania, which is exceedingly rich in flowers, scientific bee-keeping ought to be a profitable adjunct to vegetable and fruit growing.

792 Excursions farther afield were made possible by the kindness of the prefect of Elbasan, Mr. Izet Dibra, who placed a Ford car at my disposal. One such excursion took me to a Becktashi, or dervish, monastery, and another to a Greek monastery, both visits proving of considerable interest. At the first we (for Mr. Nossi was with me) were received by a dignified old priest who was wearing the same kind of flowing white robes and tall white hat as the dervish I had met at Koritza. While we sat in a vine-covered arbour outside the entrance smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee he told us how the monastery had been attacked during the revolution of 1914 by adherents of the Suni sect. The revolution was that in which Prince William of Wied, the [795] regent, was deposed; and the Sunis are a sect of Mohammedans who hate their fellow religionists the Becktashis with a hatred only possible to religious fanatics. Under cover of the revolution they not only burned down the monastery chapel, but also arrested the old "baba" (priest) who was entertaining us, and kept him in prison

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania E61

A Railway Line

As no-one but myself wanted to go on to Tirana I was put with the mails into an ordinary four-seater Ford car and continued the journey alone save for the driver. The country was well wooded with oak, ash, poplar, willow and alder. The fields were enclosed with hedges of bramble and, but for the big wild fig-trees, I might almost have been in England. I had been told that I should find in Albania no bank, no water-closet, and no railway, but as regards the railway I found this statement incorrect, for a narrow gauge track ran at the side of the road most of the way from Scutari to Tirana. It did not, however, appear to have been used for a considerable time as it was in bad repair and much broken. At one place, half-a-dozen little locomotives, dismantled and red with rust, stood idle on a siding, while in a ditch a short distance away lay a seventh—a pathetic corpse in a winding-sheet of bramble and convolvulus. Presumably the line was wrecked by the Austrians when they were in retreat at the end of the war. I should not imagine that it would be a very costly matter to put it into working order again.

The impression I received in the course of this drive was that the surrounding country was exceedingly fertile, and that much which is at present uncultivated could be made productive if modern agricultural methods were adopted. In all countries the farmer and tiller of the soil—conservative to the backbone—is slow to admit that his way of doing things can be bettered, and to this general rule the Albanian agriculturist is no exception. He knows nothing, and wants

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples!
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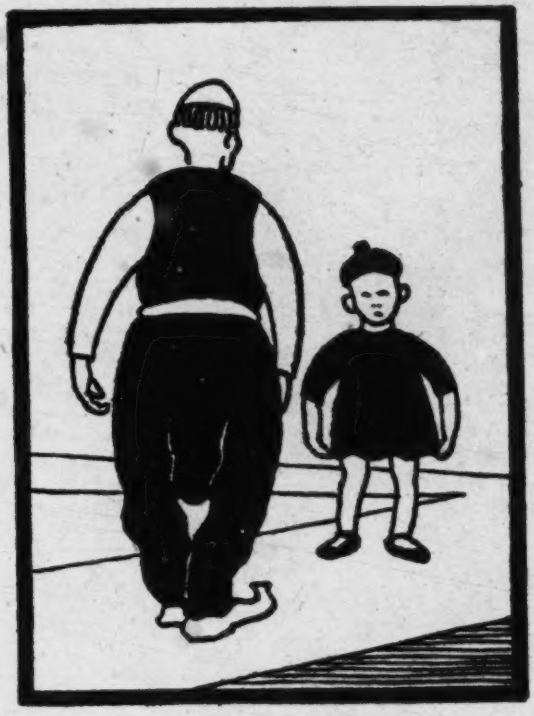
To the Land of the Eagle

241 to know nothing, of new methods. I heard of one instance
181 in which a young and progressive Albanian of the wealthy classes (landowners who lease their land to the peasant in



ANCIENT AND MODERN

return for one-third of the crop) brought back with him from Western Europe some of the latest agricultural machinery, intending to start scientific farming. He at once found himself up against not only the conservatism of the peasant but the conventions of his class—no *gentleman*

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania EG1

Tirana

soils his hands with work!—and in the end his project had to be abandoned. Since the wealth of every country comes in the first instance from the soil, this attitude of mind is to be deeply deplored. All possible means of making the soil more productive should be welcomed.

Tirana, the Albanian capital and seat of government, is not a particularly impressive place. Its chief claim to notice, politics apart, lies in its mosques, which are all very beautiful examples of old Byzantine architecture and decoration. The streets are of rough cobbles—very uncomfortable to the feet—and the houses are, for the most part, of one storey only. The shops are the rickety wooden boxes one expects to find in this part of the world, and their proprietors sit, in Turkish fashion, at the receipt of custom.

I lunched soon after my arrival at the Hotel Internationale, which is the centre of the political life of the place. It is frequented by the deputies and their friends, and discussion and argument go on all day long over the coffee-cup and the raki glass. While I was struggling with the menu, which was Greek to me, a lady, seeing my difficulty, spoke to me in English and offered her assistance. She was an American and we got into conversation. One of the first things she said was, "You will find plenty of English here". I was astonished. That there was a British Legation at Durazzo I knew, but that Tirana contained "plenty of English" was news to me. Nor did it seem a place to attract the tourist. The meeting with the American did not surprise me so much, as I knew that there were American

2:Edmonds T-8 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania EG1

To the Land of the Eagle

ooo inn. We sat outside at a table under the vines like a family party, and were joined in true democratic fashion by the driver and the mechanic of the lorry. I thought with regret of the snobbish class-distinctions of my native land. How much happier we should be if only we could abolish them!

361 The Albanian countryside at this spot was but sparsely inhabited, and houses were few and far apart. The occasional villages were tumble-down and poverty-stricken. At one place the mosque had fallen into ruins—perhaps the result of an earthquake—and no one had troubled to build it up again.

181 The Albanian, like the Turk, is something of a fatalist. He is also lazy. Doubtless it was the will of Allah that the mosque should collapse—why, then, trouble to rebuild it?

825 The broken minaret was crowned with an enormous stork's-nest on which stood the owner clapping its long beak. The stork, being a sacred bird, was in no danger, having once established itself, of being disturbed or turned out of its home.

000 Our way lay amongst mountains—soft green mountains with rounded outlines, very different in type from the jagged rocks of Montenegro. Their sides were splashed with the gold of broom and the yellow of sage, and with the purple of some wild-flower which grew in regular stripes in the crevices of out-cropping rock-strata. The air was scented and soft.

We travelled on for some hours without any incident beyond an occasional stoppage to tighten a bolt, to retrieve

● 241 a loose nut, or to do some minor repairs to the engine. At length the plain of Argyrocastron came into view—a wide, well-cultivated valley many miles in extent, where green

½ [near Argyrocastron-- 166 Analyst]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania E61

On the Way to Argyrocastron

crops alternated with fields of ploughed earth as red as the soil of South Devon. It was the first considerable stretch of land I had so far seen which gave the impression of being well tilled and worked. We descended by a serpentine, and then, turning sharply to the northwards, followed a road which ran along the western side of the plain at the foot of

ALBANIANS AT ARGYROCASTRON

a range of slaty hills. Hay-making was in progress. Mowers —big, strapping fellows, white-fezzed and ragged—swung their scythes with a rhythmical motion, filling the air with the delicious scent of newly-cut grass. Elsewhere men were ploughing laboriously, in the manner which has survived from biblical times, with bullocks and wooden ploughs.

The opposite side of the valley—which appeared to be